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United States Department of Agriculture,

BUREAU OF ANIMAL INDUSTRY.

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TEXAS FEVER IN CATTLE.

A publication will soon be issued by the U. S. Department of Agriculture on the subject of Texas fever, a disease which has been a very serious obstacle to the development and prosperity of the cattle industry of this country, especially in the South. Some years ago it was conclusively proven by the experts of the Bureau of Animal Industry, after extensive investigations, that this disease, which is also known as splenic fever and Southern cattle fever, is transmitted by the cattle tick, and that without this Texas fever tick there would be no Texas fever. Later experiments have been made with the object of determining the best methods of eradicating the ticks and preventing the disease. The results of these various investigations are presented in Bulletin No. 78 of the Bureau of Animal Industry. The bulletin contains valuable information for stockmen concerning practical methods for eradicating the Texas fever tick from both the animals and the pastures, and also describes measures to be adopted for the prevention and treatment of the disease itself.

The cattle tick is not only the carrier of the Texas fever infection, but is a parasite which deprives cattle of much blood, retards growth, reduces the milking capacity, and induces an irritable state known as "tick worry." It therefore becomes manifest that the extermination of this tick will be of the greatest advantage to the profitable raising and feeding of cattle in the infected district. This territory has been carefully studied and a quarantine line established which extends across the country from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

It is well known that the animals coming from below this line and sold in the northern stock yards bring an average of one-fourth to one-half a cent less per pound than the quoted market prices. If we allow an individual weight of 600 pounds for all classes of animals, including stock, beef, and dairy cattle, there is a decrease in value of at least \$1.50 per head for the estimated 705,000 southern cattle annually marketed under these conditions, which amounts to a loss of \$1,057,500 each year. This decreased value reacts and fixes the valuation of all cattle which remain in the infected territory. Thus, it is estimated that there are in the quarantined area four and a half millions of cattle east of the Mississippi and eleven millions west of that river, which at a reduction of \$1.50 per head will give the enormous shrinkage in value of \$23,250,000, directly chargeable to the cattle tick. This should be regarded as an unnecessary reduction in the assets of the infected country.

The above figures do not include the decrease in flesh and the lack of development of the infested animals, nor the expense to the Federal, State, and local governments for enforcing the quarantine regulations. The shrinkage in the milk production of cattle harboring many ticks will average 1 quart per day, and the loss occasioned at 3 cents per quart for the 875,000 ticky dairy cattle out of more than 4,000,000 dairy cattle below the quarantine line would amount to \$26,250 per day, or, counting 300 milking days for each cow to the year, to \$7,875,000 annually. It has also been calculated that approximately 387,500 animals die

each year of Texas fever, and at an estimated value of \$15 per head this means a loss of \$5,812,500 per annum.

If all these losses are taken into account, it will be seen that Texas fever is responsible for a loss of about \$40,000,000 annually to the stockmen of this country. These appalling losses and annual sacrifices of the cattle raisers it is believed can be entirely effaced, in time, by methods outlined in this publication, and at a small proportionate cost, for, with the general application of the measures described, the cattle tick may be wholly exterminated. Every dollar wisely expended in this work will be returned many fold during each succeeding year.

One of the difficulties encountered by the cattle raisers in fighting the plague is in confusing the Texas fever tick with the various other ticks occasionally found on cattle, but which are entirely harmless so far as the transmission of the disease is concerned. For this reason a brief popular description of the various ticks found on cattle, together with colored illustrations showing their appearance in different stages, is contained in this publication.

The Department of Agriculture has just issued the annual regulations for the prevention of the spread of Texas fever, effective February 1. On and after that date cattle are not allowed to be moved from the quarantined area to other parts of the country except by rail for immediate slaughter and under certain conditions prescribed in the regulations.

Most of the cattle in the Southern States are immune to Texas fever, but as they are infested with ticks they disseminate the disease, which is very destructive to other cattle. It is therefore necessary to observe strict regulations during the greater portion of the year to prevent the spread of the infection to noninfected areas, as serious losses would surely follow.

During the winter months the danger of infection is so diminished that cattle are permitted to be moved from the quarantined area under less stringent regulations than at other seasons of the year. The open season applies during the months of November, December, and January to all localities, and for the States of Virginia and North Carolina the time is extended to March 15.

The quarantined area for 1906, as prescribed in the regulations just issued, includes the following territory: The whole of the States of Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, South Carolina, and Florida, the Indian Territory, all of Georgia except a few northern counties, the southern half of California, the southeastern half of Oklahoma, the eastern half of Texas, the southern half of Tennessee, a few counties in southeastern Kentucky, the eastern three-fourths of North Carolina, and the southeastern part of Virginia.

Southern cattle which are properly dipped or otherwise satisfactorily treated under Government supervision and freed from ticks may be shipped without restrictions.

In some of the States and Territories which are quarantined on account of this disease the local authorities are putting forth efforts to exterminate the ticks which infest the cattle. This work is mainly conducted in localities contiguous to the quarantine line, and when the cattle ticks are eradicated from a given district the quarantine line is changed and shipping restrictions are removed.

Copies of the above-mentioned bulletin and regulations may be obtained from the Chief of the Bureau of Animal Industry, Washington, D. C.

